

Arte Ederren Bilboko Museoa -
Tabakalera

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THAT TIME EN

The exhibition takes the Bilbao Fine Arts Museum's collection as its starting point, with more than one hundred works being temporarily displaced and *developed upon* at Tabakalera to offer a unique story about art and memory. Its title comes from the play *That Time* by Samuel Beckett (1976), in which the Irish poet and playwright interweaves three voices that refer to three different moments in the life of the protagonist: the voices of youth, maturity, and old age. Likewise, the showing is structured through a circular visit around Tabakalera's exhibition spaces, in three areas reflecting three *voices* that recreate the past (Voice C), the present (Voice A), and the future (Voice B), placing the visitor before three different aspects of the collection's time and history. Past and present were two fundamental focuses of the collection work at Bilbao Fine Arts Museum starting in 1908, including significant examples of artistic manifestations arising between the 2nd century AD and our times. On the other hand, the Tabakalera centre, whose mission includes promoting contemporary

creation, art, and present-day debate, presents itself as an ideal location to offer a new context for the museum's collection. As such, *That Time* addresses the collection with a perspective firmly based in the present that swings like a pendulum between both past and future eras.

The beginning of the exhibition presents eleven busts from different sculptors and eras that draw attention to the *memorial* nature of portraits that, faced with the fragility of the world and temporary things, keeps alive the memory of those lost. It encourages memory and brings it from the past to another time (the age of the living) and another place (the present). Behold the anonymous works and those difficult to date, with others created by well-known artists (Durrio, Quintín de Torre, Josep Clará, Eduardo Arroyo). Among those depicted, are individuals that were famous in their day (painter Aurelio Arteta, African-American dancer and singer Joséphine Baker), and others now unknown. Owing to the portrait, these eleven people are placed in eternity's timelessness.

In the first hall (Voice C) works from Vicente Ameztoy, Ibon Aranberri, Bonifacio, Marta Cárdenas, Juan Luis Goenaga, Susana Talayero, and Cy Twombly recreate a past, archaic time, albeit not concluded, a time in which "what was" still hasn't left us entirely. The material presence of the past can still be seen in the artistic forms of the present (*Ídolo*, by Joan Pié; *Mujer de la langosta*, by Alberto; *Ocho mentiras bidimensionales*, by Elena Asins; *Raíces*, by Remigio Mendiburu). There are also enigmas of a secularised present (*El cazador*, by Óscar Domínguez; *Figura tumbada en espejo*, by Francis Bacon), conjured by the ritual and myth of medieval sculpture (*San Juan al pie de la cruz*) and altar works (*San Francisco en oración*, by El Greco) with their representations of divine life and mankind's destiny.

Domesticating time, dividing it into homogeneous units and organising it rationally, eight hours for work, eight hours for rest, and eight hours for leisure, was the aim of the 19th century's Industrial Revolution, the consequences of which we still live with today. The exhibition's second hall (Voice A) portrays present time, where the demands of a technological and industrial society are manifested in the work of numerous artists (Vicente Cutanda, Celso Lagar, Daniel Vázquez Díaz, Aurelio Arteta, Agustín Ibarrola, June Crespo). Technology and industrial energy as powerful creative forces; war and its consequences as major

collateral damage (Goya, Anthony Caro, Mari Puri Herrero, Idoia Montón, Vicente Larrea, Iñaki Gracenea).

The last hall confronts the visitor with the future's uncertainties through Voice B, where Beckett's play acts as the voice of youth. Pieces from Txomin Badiola, John Davies, Fernand Léger, Markus Lüpertz, Nemesio Mogrobojo, Susana Solano, and Maria Helena Vieira da Silva recreate the diverse ways in which contemporary artists have tackled the history of art –the past and its ghosts– to create a new art. In *Albia*, by Mari Puri Herrero, the figures are stripped away until taking on a ghostly quality; contrastingly, in *Santa Faz* by Zurbarán, the artist transforms the image of an absent and spectral body into a perpetual presence.

Three commissioned works by three contemporary artists, *The Same Ground* by Ilke Gears, *Exergo* by Jorge Moneo, and *Pausa pulsar* by Ainara LeGardon, are also presented in *That Time*, interrupting the continuity of the works belonging to the museum's collection. These new productions were created specifically for this exhibition, and explore the connections, as well as the conflicts, between temporary and time-based art, inviting the public to explore the mechanisms of language in contemporary art and probe the collective and individual imaginations included in museum-based storytelling on the grounds of an artistic production centre like Tabakalera.

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